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## FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION(S)

**Submitted by: Conservation Community**

**Finding:** *(i.e., Conclusions reached after investigation and/or evaluation of facts)*

**When assessing the costs of various forest management options, the cost estimates for different methods must include the costs of environmental mitigation, both on and off of the project site.**

**Background and Supporting Evidence:** *(A short statement justifying the Finding and describing desired outcome(s); usually no more than half a page.)*

There has been much discussion about the per acre costs of various treatment methods for fuels reduction (e.g. hand-thinning, cut to length vs. whole tree, etc.). However, most discussions have failed to acknowledge the costs associated with mitigations both at the project site and elsewhere in the Basin. In order to truly compare the cost effectiveness of different methods, these costs must be incorporated into the discussion. Local "on-site" costs will include temporary and permanent BMPs and the long-term follow up by the public land management agency to monitor the area post project, for example, monitoring a temporary road to make sure it does not become a local "neighborhood" trail, as often occurs after temporary access roads have been created.

Off-site costs include the costs of mitigating the additional sediment loading from a project. For example, per the TMDL model, which is based on a California law requiring Lahontan RWQCB to achieve certain load reductions, there is a certain level of sediment and nutrient loading that must be reduced to achieve state, federal and TRPA water quality standards. Thus, if forest management increases sediment loading through activities such as creating new access roads, opening up areas for "landings", etc., then the amount of additional sediment from these activities must be reduced somewhere else in the Basin. There are various options for how this is done, whether local jurisdictions required additional tax dollars to do projects that reduce sediment loading from somewhere in their jurisdiction, or perhaps homeowners are required to implement more BMPs, thus increasing their out-of-pocket costs, etc.

**Recommendation(s)** *(Based upon an analysis of the Finding, the following recommendation(s) should be made to the Governors):*

- 1. Cost comparisons for different forest thinning methods must include all direct and indirect costs associated with mitigation (which occurs both on and off site).**

**Impacts of Implementation:** *(The implementation of any Recommendation is likely to have specific impacts. Consider potential consequences related to each of the following areas):*

Analysis of impacts on the following factors is REQUIRED (Best Estimate):

- ☐ Cost  
No expected costs associated with assessing this information.
- ☐ Funding source  
No additional funding sources needed
- ☐ Staffing  
It is expected that more staff time from multiple agencies will be needed to assess these cost estimates initially; eventually there should be a "database" with all of these costs that agencies can simply refer to.
- ☐ Existing regulations and/or laws  
All recommendations can be performed under existing laws.

Analysis of impacts on the following factors is OPTIONAL:

- ☐ Operational
- ☐ Social
- ☐ Political
- ☐ Policy
- ☐ Health and Safety
- ☐ Environmental  
It is expected that when these additional costs are considered, the more environmentally sensitive approaches will often be the most cost-effective approaches as well.
- ☐ Interagency